

## CHAPTER VII

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

121 In this study I have attempted to understand and  
128 to describe the structure and process of Bedouin society  
• 105 in al-Qasr by utilizing the data of politics. The primary  
assumption of the study has been that political analysis must  
proceed along lines which give recognition to, and focus upon,  
the centrality of the concept and structure of authority and  
the way in which it contributes to an orderly social process.  
This study has dealt with the structure and function of  
authority and, as much as possible, its theory and practice  
in both contemporary and historical Bedouin society. Authority  
in al-Qasr is intimately tied up with the system of rights  
and obligations obtaining between individuals which is ex-  
pressed through a structure of social roles. At another  
level of social organization, the rights and obligations  
inherent in a structure of authority inform a segmentary  
lineage system. Part of this study aims to understand and  
to underline the organizational principles from which the  
Bedouins of al-Qasr derive their meaning of authority, social  
roles, and social interaction.

In the first part of the study some of the general

128 historical aspects and specific economic facts of the Bedouin  
105 social process were made explicit. The intention of the first  
121 two chapters was to indicate the scope and dynamics of  
culture change now occurring through the growth of a market  
economy and the expansion of political awareness in al-Qasr.  
The economic transformation of Bedouin society and the move  
towards political integration into the larger Egyptian  
society are, more and more, reflected in a shift from dependence  
upon communal-based social ties to associative relationships  
based upon private landholding, individual competitive par-  
ticipation in the national economy and profit-keeping, and  
new rights and obligations brought on by the activities of  
national and provincial level politics.

The first part of this study also sought to understand  
the meaning of social change in al-Qasr. Due to historical  
experiences and ecological factors, social structure and  
social change carry different meanings for the Bedouin  
recipients and the Egyptian agents of change. In some cases,  
it was seen, it is even dubious that Egyptian officials are  
responding to the felt needs of the Bedouins. As background  
to a later discussion of authority and change, we tried to  
understand what the felt needs of the Bedouins are at this  
time. One aspect of this problem was to define the traditional  
units of Bedouin society as opposed to the modern administrative  
units, and to consider change in light of this contrast. My

128 concern with the nature of al-Qasr's past not only helps us  
• 105 to understand the Bedouin present but should also help us  
121 to conceive of the Bedouin future. What data I was able to  
collect concerning the historical development of the Bedouin  
authority structure and its place in the economic transforma-  
tion of Bedouin society relate to the later discussion of the  
ascribed nature of leadership roles and the probability that,  
in the future, access to political roles will become a matter  
of individual achievement and a heightened awareness of things  
political. In connection with this we saw that the Governor  
of Marsa Matruh through the institution of new bureaucratic  
structures, such as the Governor's Council and new electoral  
guidelines, is fostering political change in this direction.

Although the largest part of this study dealt with  
the political aspect of traditional roles and structures,  
the contention was that traditional complexes are increasingly  
unable to deal with the cultural problems of the day. This  
applies to economic as well as political structures, as the  
first part of this study is intended to show. But among  
the New Nations and, in particular, whenever we are dealing  
with tribal and peasant communities, "the most striking changes  
have been the decline in the authority of the elders in terms  
of both community and family organization . . . (because) the  
life experience of the elders . . . is at best only partially  
relevant to the current needs) (Halpern 1967:123).

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Authority represents and maintains a legitimate political order and an allotment of power. Without a system of authoritative norms, conflict could not be restrained and no social system could survive (Parsons 1960:183). As the concept of authority and its meaning undergo change so also do the appropriate structures and the power distribution between persons and groups change. The structure and dynamics of authority in al-Qasr were investigated through an analysis of the categories and interrelations of the Bedouin segmentary lineage system. This analysis was based primarily upon a definition of the organizational concepts and principles of Bedouin society such as unilineal rule of descent, residence, cognation, and contractual agreement and alliance.

While knowledge of these structural principles is fundamental to an understanding of Bedouin society, it was noted that a strict reliance on them would tend to limit one's understanding of politics in al-Qasr since they in fact conceal the nature of power and the functioning of semi-institutionalized roles. Nevertheless, these structural principles are informed by a set of key beliefs and values which are inculcated during the socialization process, and in a complementary way all of these concepts lend support to a corporate structure of authority. This corporate structure of authority which was discussed in terms of the concept and leadership role, or office, of 'aqila was claimed to be the

128 basis of social control in traditional Bedouin society. To  
• 105 a large extent the corporate authority structure in al-Qasr  
121 is still intact but is undergoing change at this time. Change  
of the rule of consensus and the way in which it has reference  
to traditional principles of organization for the regulation  
of politics is the subject of the final two chapters in this  
study.

The unilinear principle and its corollary, the corporate group, were defined as the basis for the structural division of Bedouin society into groups. Within the context of a traditional struggle for ecological advantage and a growing participation in the modern political process of interest group conflict, the lineage groups of al-Qasr were considered as political, or authority, groups. The membership and boundaries of these political groups parallel those of structures formed through an alliance of tertiary segments of the lineage system which is itself sanctioned by the rules of unilineality, marriage, residence, and adherence to a legal and moral code known as the rawaabit al-'awaqil ("the bonds of the wise men"). The central political notion of Bedouin society, and the one which converts a kinship group into a political group, is that of 'aqila. The 'aqila principle, which is manifest in the role of the corporate leader, refers to both the idea of collective responsibility and to a politically instituted office. The concept of 'aqila is essential to an understanding

128 of internal social control and political group interaction  
• 105 in Bedouin society. In order to grasp the meaning of 'aqila  
121 in Bedouin society it was necessary to explore something of  
the history of the concept.

Max Weber (1947:143-145) has drawn attention to the political significance of collective responsibility and the way in which it is related to the concepts of corporate leadership and self-help (blood-revenge) in traditional societies such as the Bedouins of al-Qasr represent: "All are held responsible for the action of any one . . . (and) the action of certain members, the 'representatives,' may be binding upon the others." Blood-revenge, or the law of self-help, is an instance of regulation through convention, and this practice, Weber claims, leads to "solidarity." Weber further claims, and is supported by the evidence which I present here concerning the concept of 'aqila, that we are likely to find a representative office especially where money must be collected and administered in the interest of the group (p. 145).

In modern political anthropology, Evans-Pritchard was the first to clearly equate kinship relations with political relations: he conceived of kinship groups as political conflict groups within the framework of a balanced opposition between structurally and ideologically similar units (1940:190). I have obviously found this conceptualization of tribal

128 politics very helpful, but the major emphasis of my study was  
121 the authority structure rather than the kinship structure.

105 Authority was considered in terms of two aspects, both of  
which tell us something about kinship structure: in one  
way authority is the property of relations which obtain  
between persons and roles of a group, and it acts to define  
the structural boundaries and to secure the structural con-  
tinuity of the group; in another way, authority is the property  
of a tertiary group expressed at the secondary level of the  
lineage structure and represented by the office of 'aqila.  
In this last sense, authority defines the group vis a vis  
other groups and acts to promote political order in society.  
Authority, in view of these two aspects, was described as  
operating at the various levels of the lineage structure,  
i.e., the familial, the internal and external levels. I  
sought to clarify the discussion by defining concepts and  
roles which characterize authority and political action at  
these various levels. One role, the shaib, which functions  
solely at the familial level of the authority structure  
was described; the fully institutionalized authority role  
of 'aqila was analyzed as were a number of only partly insti-  
tutionalized roles, or power roles. The most important of  
these power roles was seen to be that of the rajal khair.  
The institutionalized roles, and this includes the shaib  
or head of the household, were described as functioning

128 according to public expectational patterns while the non-  
121 institutionalized roles, being by definition less impinged  
• 105 upon by structural norms, could function outside these  
patterns. This distinction between types of roles was  
seen to be the basis of the rajal khair's ability to manipu-  
late persons and events in a play for power. These three  
levels of authority were factored out from one another solely  
for analytical reasons. In reality, the one shades into the  
other: the authority of the shaib at times overlaps with that  
of the 'aqila, and the power of the rajal khair and rajal salih  
at time impinge upon, and detract from, the rightful influence  
of both the shaib and the 'aqila. Role analysis, as it is used  
in this study, I consider one of the most important methods  
available for an investigation of a political problem.

Through political role analysis it was shown that the  
role of 'aqila is the most important for an understanding of  
the structure and functioning of Bedouin society. Political,  
or authority, groups are defined in terms of the presence or  
absence of this role; hence the whole political structure  
proceeds from this concept. The legitimacy of the 'aqila,  
and therefore the legitimacy of the political order which  
obtains, stems from an explicit legal agreement among members  
of the tertiary and secondary groups known as the rawaabit al-  
'awaagil. These bonds are a contract between the 'aqila and  
the other members of the corporate group, a mutual pact which

128 sets forth the rights and duties of the political office and  
121 the corporate members. The duplication and reciprocal honor-  
105 ing of this contract by tertiary groups related, in fact or  
fiction, according to the unilineal principle gives rise to  
a political alliance of groups who are viewed as "one corporate  
body" at the secondary level of the lineage structure by all  
outsiders. Structural relations between secondary groups in  
Bedouin society are chartered in accordance with the several  
principles of social organization, such as marriage, contract,  
residence, and also according to the process of conflict control.

Actual conflict in al-Qasr usually takes place between  
secondary groups even though it is sometimes expressed as  
conflict between primary or tribal groupings. Coalition for  
the attainment of political goals and the process of conflict  
control at the supra-tertiary levels of the lineage hierarchy  
depend upon the recognition of mutual usefulness and a common  
means for settling disputes and re-establishing social harmony.  
The problem-solving device which assures the conditions of an  
orderly social process is the system of Bedouin customary law,  
a set of legal and moral norms (Fortes and Evans-Pritchard  
1940:20), known as the 'awaiyid Awlad 'Ali ("the customs of  
the sons of 'Ali").

The customary law of the Bedouins of al-Qasr was  
described and a number of case studies occurring at the  
various levels of the lineage and authority structure was

128 presented. According to the moral and legal norms of the  
121 Bedouins, conflict control is effected formally and informally.

• 105 A primary value of Bedouin society instructs all men to mediate conflict whenever possible lest quarrels spread to involve more people and a wider loss of rights. Redress of wrongs takes place through the intervention of, what were defined as, either a mediator at the informal level or an arbiter at the formal level of conflict control. If neither of these peace-making mechanisms is invoked, or should both fail in their attempt to restore social harmony, then the law of self-help, or blood-revenge, may operate. This method of controlling conflict is, according to most of the Bedouins, to be avoided at all costs.

The notion of the "third party" to conflict was developed in this study. It was pointed out that in the case of the triadic relationship in conflict control it is the rajal khair or the rajal salih who usually becomes involved, and that this role has the right to mediate but not to judge. This is in fact the distinction which the Bedouins themselves make between the roles of arbiter-'aqila and mediator-"third party." This differentiation between political roles is equivalent to a distinction between formal authority and informal power.

In order to further explicate the political role-set in Bedouin society a classificatory distinction was made

128 between traditional roles and modern legal roles; the former  
121 category included the 'agila, the rajal khair, and rajal salih,  
105 while the latter was made up of the 'umda and the shaikh. The  
roles of 'umda and shaikh have been historically imposed upon  
the Bedouins from without and thus were not viewed as indigenous  
to the al-Qasr political system. The role classification used  
here, which is borrowed from the work of Max Weber, is purely  
analytical for in reality both of the modern legal roles  
figure importantly in any complete treatment of Bedouin  
authority and its structure. All of the role-players who make  
up the internal and external authority structures of al-Qasr  
were considered to be members of a "status group" who possess  
high "status-honor" which is based upon family and wealth and,  
to a lesser extent in modern times, age.

Finally, the concept of the "cultural broker" was  
introduced in an attempt to delineate the nature of political  
change in al-Qasr. In the last chapter of the study the case  
study of Hajj 'Ali was used to develop the idea of "cultural  
broker." In some ways, the first five chapters of this study  
serve as a background to the discussion of Hajj 'Ali as a  
"cultural broker." The dynamics of the historical, economic,  
and political situations, the changing meanings of kinship  
concepts and other structures, and the growing tendency to  
trust secular as opposed to sacred and traditional authority,  
all of these factors converge to attach importance and immediacy

128 to an understanding of the role of "cultural broker" in the  
121 present and future of al-Qasr.  
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Hajj 'Ali provided us with an example of the secularization of traditional society. This process has been described as one "whereby men become increasingly rational, analytical, and empirical in their political action (Almond and Powell 1966:24). A number of the critical attitudes held by Hajj 'Ali had to do with the Bedouin conception of marriage, law, and authority; in each case it was seen that he questioned the legitimacy of Bedouin tradition and, eventually, would like to steer the Bedouins of al-Qasr away from this world view into the larger Egyptian political community. Besides Hajj 'Ali's discontent with the 'awaiyid Awlad 'Ali and other Bedouin customs, it was suggested that he desired change in al-Qasr's traditional structures and ideas because of his own design upon higher status and authority in the Egyptian bureaucracy of Marsa Matruh, a reference group with which all members of the "status group" identify.

What is happening in the case of Hajj 'Ali and al-Qasr is a sign of the times as far as the New Nations are concerned. The growing need for centralization in order to compete on the international market transforms the traditional structures of the New Nations whenever and wherever it must. But this process is not just a matter of induced change; it is not a one-sided affair. Inherently, any social structure,

128 including "traditional" ones, is a dynamic mechanism for the  
121 solution of cultural problems. Related to this is the fact  
• 105 that the individuals who manipulate these mechanisms are  
creative and responsive agents of change themselves. The  
need for central coordination and cooperation with national  
governments sets the stage and provides the stimuli for new  
cultural responses and devices which result in novel and  
creative internal reorganization and reintegration around  
new cultural patterns (Moore 1958:1-28). The case of Hajj  
'Ali illustrates the beginnings of such a reorganizational  
process in al-Qasr.

The main objective striven for in this study deals  
with only one aspect of the problem of change in the New  
Nations, but it is an important aspect: all politically-  
oriented researchers should try to explain the legitimacy and  
the dynamics of authority and structure in society. In my  
particular case, discussion centered on lineage theory and  
its corollary the corporate group, and authority was treated  
in terms of political role analysis and local leadership patterns.  
Change was viewed almost wholly as an endogenous process, but  
the importance of exogenous forces was not played down. It  
was claimed that an essential part of the "cultural broker"  
role was to legitimate the authority of the nation-state in  
order to effect change and legitimate his own authority role.

Conflict control was seen as a life-long process. As

128 culture change takes place, new bases for conflict arise and  
121 new devices for control come into being. Politics was viewed  
● 105 as the process of problem solution by the group, from the  
family level to the total societal level. Politics involves  
the struggle for, and the legitimation of, power, and functions  
to bring about some kind of an ideological adjustment between  
political groups: "Systems of beliefs are made in the image  
of an idealized home, and there one loves and obeys one's  
parents, loves the remaining members of the family, and treats  
all other persons as outsiders" (De Grazia 1948:49).

A struggle for power characterizes Bedouin society as  
it does any other human society. Equality in al-Qasr, as in  
all human societies, is an ideal and only an ideal. Inequality,  
in reality, persists and structures the patterns and issues  
of conflict in Bedouin society. There are possessors and non-  
possessors of property and wealth: there are possessors and  
non-possessors of "status honor." Consequently, there are  
possessors and non-possessors of authority, for authority  
derives from property and "status honor." But in al-Qasr,  
and in every human society, property is not the singular  
prerequisite of "status honor" and authority. (In this  
sense, one fundamental aspect of Marxian theory is totally  
incorrect.) We saw in the cases of 'Amm Salih the "holy  
man" and the prospective 'aqila of Bait Braik, that authority  
is determined in terms of a complex of structural and ideational

128 factors. Nevertheless, in al-Qasr inequality does exist and  
121 is related to an unequal distribution of authority between  
105 individuals and groups, and the important point is that this  
is the basis of conflict. As culture change proceeds along  
with al-Qasr's need to be integrated into the national society,  
the threat to the traditional distribution of power and  
authority will foster new patterns of conflict; new means for  
dealing with conflict will also have to be found. Creative  
individuals such as Hajj 'Ali will have a hand in the new  
processes of conflict control and cultural invention. Traditional  
patterns of conflict and political structures provide  
meaning and a semblance of stability to al-Qasr society, but  
when conformity to political values becomes relative to motives  
of expediency, when politics become secularized, then instability  
and change in structures follow. And traditional concepts  
must be redefined and reevaluated to cope with the new conditions.

121 In the case of the New Nations, political change seems  
to be reflected in a shift from traditional organizational  
principles to a modern bureaucratic principle which entails  
a higher differentiation in the political structure. And,  
as Fortes (1953:24) has noted, unilinear descent groups, such  
as the Bedouins of al-Qasr, tend to break down when specialization  
sets in.

The notion of viewing social change in terms of a  
shift to the bureaucratic structural principle is not, of

- 105 The judicial process among Awlad Ali of the Western Desert of Egypt has been dealt with in the context of political organization of the group. The main feature of the political organization of Awlad Ali is the absence of centralized leadership. The only formally recognized leadership is that of the aqila, the leader of the bait tribal segment. The sources of the aqila's authority derive from a number of sources, one of which is his judicial role. It is through him that disputes involving members of his bait are solved. The process by which he performs this crucial function is that of informal mediation in which both the personal qualities of the aqila, as well as the weight of his tribal segment, play an important role. This is especially important in a society with no court system or formal hearing and where durability of any settlement depends on its being accepted by the parties involved.
- 105 The main aim of the judicial process is to affect reconciliation of the parties and to restore a certain degree of social order and cohesion that was disrupted by the dispute. The need to restore the social order and to maintain friendly relations between tribal members is a response to certain aspects of the natural and social environment in which the group finds itself. Natural resources in the area are very meager, and subsistence activities require that the tribesmen constantly move with their herds for pasture throughout an area already divided among the various tribal segments. Since the place and nature of pasture differ from one year to the next, the identity of the specific tribal unit which would be sought for help varies correspondingly. This creates a general feeling of dependency that characterizes the social relations in the area.

105 On the other hand, there is always a feeling of rivalry and hostility  
598 between the different tribal segments which goes back to the era of  
571 tribal warfare. Thus, the social relations among the tribal population  
are characterized by a certain amount of ambivalence which is hidden be-  
hind a facade of formality in the way tribal members treat one another  
in day-to-day activities. There are certain rules of etiquette describ-  
571 ing the way members of the same tribal segment should behave toward one  
576 another and toward other tribesmen and outsiders. Failure to abide by  
[598] these rules may subject the violator to a symbolic fine of a goat or a  
[571] sheep slaughtered for a feast to which everyone is invited. These feasts,  
[182] or dinners as they are called, have various functions, the most important  
105 of which is the integrative one. In an area where the population is usu-  
571 ally dispersed, these dinners offer an opportunity to the tribesmen who  
574 happen to be in the area at the time of the feast to attend, where they  
182 eat, meet other tribesmen, and exchange information about what is happen-  
ing in other parts of the area. It is from such dinners that the tribes-  
men get to know about the available pastures, about the prices of sheep  
and goats in different markets, and about who is doing what and where.  
The occasion also signifies the restoration of the violator of the rules  
to the social life of the group and the reinforcement of those rules.  
105 This is also true with the tribal meetings, or mi'ad, which are held to  
[598] announce settlements in more serious cases. It is on this basis that  
[571] the mi'ad should not be considered as a tribal court. It is more of a  
[574] social occasion where food and drinks are served and where parties in-  
volved and all those invited by them talk about everything except the  
[598] dispute itself. In certain instances, the financial settlement agreed  
upon in the informal mediation is exaggerated when announced in the mi'ad

105 so that part of it may be reduced in honor of some prominent members  
629 who are attending the meeting. When part of the financial agreement is  
182 reduced in honor of a person, this creates an obligation on the part of  
621 that person to reciprocate in a similar situation when one arises. This  
551 creates an active interest in the settlement on the part of individuals  
who otherwise are not involved, and insures the durability of the settle-  
ment. The social cohesion is maintained.

105 The need to keep friendly relations with all tribesmen is reflected  
571 in the judicial process in its procedural aspect, as well as in judicial  
578 reasoning, that is, the logic according to which facts in certain cases  
627 are assessed. With regard to procedures, there is an emphasis on avoid-  
182 ing face-to-face confrontations between the disputing parties until an  
agreement has been reached by means of the mediators. Only then is it  
that the parties see and talk to one another. This is especially true  
in serious cases such as homicide or serious assault where face-to-face  
confrontation is likely to lead to more hostilities.

105 The emphasis on reconciliation may explain, at least in part, the in-  
571 formality of the judicial process. Leaving the process of dispute settle-  
627 ment informal gives it a measure of flexibility which permits the treatment  
182 of each case as unique without being tied down by rigid formal rules. This  
does not mean, however, that there are no rules to be followed, or that  
there is no place for legal precedents. It simply means that the rules are  
very general and that the legal precedents are used merely as a guide in  
solving similar cases. The main guide remains, however, the desire to  
achieve a successful settlement that satisfies all parties. It is only  
through achieving such successful settlements that the social order is  
maintained and the tribal cohesion is secured.

\*175 Order was 'not a true and proper State but something very  
\*648 similar'.<sup>1</sup> We have seen how these political functions were  
\*795 further developed under the rule of Sayyid al-Mahdi and how  
793 under the rule of Sayyid Ahmad al-Sharif what may justly  
be called an embryonic State came into being. The Head  
of the Order was by this time less the religious Head of an  
Islamic fraternity than the leading representative of a nascent  
nationalism which became increasingly conscious of itself in the  
long struggle against the Italians under Sanusiya leadership.  
In this struggle the Order became more and more a political  
organization which directed, administratively, economically,  
and militarily, the entire Bedouin population, and morally the  
entire population of Cyrenaica, Bedouin and townsmen alike,  
against the common enemy. When truce was made in 1917,  
whatever the Italians and British may have asserted to the  
contrary, they had, in fact, to treat with Sayyid Idris not only  
as the Head of a religious Order, but also as the Head of a  
political organization which represented, and alone represented,  
the political aspirations of a people. As events turned out, the  
Italians, by destroying the Sanusiya organization, cut out the  
intervening structure of lodges and Shaikhs and made more  
evident the political status of the Head of the Order.

• 105 What has happened during the century which has passed  
\*175 since the first Brothers of the Order began to build the lodge  
\*648 and till the soil at what is now al-Zawiya al-Baida must be  
\*795 viewed in relation to Bedouin tribal structure. A man coming  
793 from outside and with religious authority established himself  
as Head of the acephalous Bedouin society of Cyrenaica, and  
circumstances in which that whole society was forced to act for  
a long period of time against external enemies transformed his  
religious fraternity into a political organization. The Sanusiya  
Order from the first identified itself with the Bedouin and  
laboured to bring about tribal unity under its aegis. Under  
[668] Turkish rule nationalist tendencies, as distinct from, and  
overriding, tribal loyalties, were latent, and the role of the  
Sanusiya within the frame of the Ottoman Empire was still  
predominantly religious rather than political; but when the  
Italians sought to subjugate the Bedouin their resistance, in  
the very clear moral issue presented to them, manifested itself

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., p. 11.

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as a nationalist movement, with a corresponding effect on the character of the Sanusiya Order and on the status of its Head. The final stage in the transformation of a religious revival into a political movement was brought about by the clash of European arms. Amid the roar of planes and guns the Bedouin learnt to see themselves more clearly as a single people, the Sanusi of Cyrenaica, in a wider world, and came to be regarded as such by those engaged in the struggle.

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613 kin also exist. Two ways of naming these clusters are adopted—  
 602 all groups, whether they are elementary families, an odd assort-  
 121 ment of kindred sharing a common tent for reasons of expedi-  
 178 ency, or tribal groups, have a name. Sometimes these clusters are  
 621 named after a prominent living male, or a deceased kinsman of  
 173 the same kind. Sometimes these little groups are named after a  
 551 woman, perhaps the grandmother of the group.<sup>15</sup> Thus a small  
 group of two or three tents will be distinguished from another  
 similar cluster within the camp, and so on for a number of groups,  
 depending on the size of the camp. Most camps, however many  
 tents they contain, have names for progressively inclusive clus-  
 ters of tents until a twofold named division is reached. Tertiary  
 segments that are forced to split contain therefore two groups  
 with names already attached to them. When a split occurs, the  
 name of the tertiary segment is pushed into the area of ambiguity  
 and the names of what were previously two clusters become the  
 names of two new tertiary segments, with a minimum adjust-  
 ment in usage and a minor re-shuffle at the tertiary level of seg-  
 mentation. Names cannot continue to be pushed into this area of  
 the genealogy interminably, otherwise it would gradually expand  
 into a vast pool of names. For a few generations the name dis-  
 pensed with in this way becomes one of those ancestors about  
 whom there is argument when genealogies are given. In the  
 course of time, name after name is subjected to the process of  
 elision and eventually will cease to be of concern to anyone.

105 I now summarize the main points of the discussion. The evi-  
 613 dence that has been examined suggests that the mechanical de-  
 173 vices of telescoping, fusion of names, and extinction of lines do  
 178 not affect orders of segmentation superior to that of the tertiary  
 [551] order, and that in conditions of a completely stable population,  
 these devices alone would suffice to retain the form of the genea-  
 logical structure. But, it was argued, conditions of complete sta-  
 bility cannot be assumed; the evidence of the present distribution  
 of population among the numerous tertiary groups clearly points  
 to marked fluctuations occurring within these small groups. This  
 being so, proliferation of these groups in some areas at some

<sup>15</sup> The naming of groups within a tertiary segment is an interesting study  
 in itself, but it would be outside the limits of this discussion to make more  
 than a brief mention of it.

*The Proliferation of Segments*

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times, must follow, and conversely, while proliferation takes place here, combination will be taking place elsewhere as the population of groups decreases. The condition which compels proliferation is the alteration in the relationship of man and animals to the natural resources; and when this alteration builds up to an acute pressure on water and land, one group of a divided segment must move off to seek water elsewhere.

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The next task was to demonstrate where this kind of change occurred on the genealogy. The sudden irregularity in the number of segments at the tertiary order, compared with the uniformity at others, provided a clue. Other evidence also pointed to this as a significant order in this context: there is ambiguity displayed with regard to the identity and positioning of ancestors here; members adopted into a lineage are grafted on to it here; clients are attached to tertiary sections; groups of noblemen, when they are detached and move off to another tribe, break away at this point. This is where change occurs, but, it was agreed, in understanding the way in which it takes place, certain forms of marriage have to be taken into account. Particular emphasis was placed on cross-cousin marriage with the mother's brother's daughter, and to women outside the tertiary segment, since the effect of these forms of marriage is to produce two or more clusters of cognatic kindred in camps largely composed of agnates, and to emphasize the line of cleavage in a lineage segment. So that when, therefore, a split occurs, the line it takes is predetermined. Proliferation, even when necessary, does not finally come about, however, until an occasion permits the separation of groups to be demonstrated by a violation of the conditions of membership of a group. Details of three such occasions were offered: the demand for blood-money between agnates who previously had constituted a politically undivided section; behaviour contrary to the demands of agnatic kinship in attendance and gift-giving at funerals; and failure to participate in a pilgrimage to the saint's tomb of a particular section. But another query remained: how are the newly formed groups named? It was seen that names already in daily use by the small group of people concerned came to assume a new significance, while the name which had previously spanned them all is disregarded and pushed into the area of ambiguity whence later it is elided altogether.

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● 105 Change due to the normal and inevitable process of proliferation  
613 is thus managed within the structural limits of the tertiary section  
1973 without disturbing any of the superior orders in the system. The  
1978 latter remain fixed over long periods, but the tertiary sections of  
a particular secondary action may be reduced in number over a  
few generations while another secondary section may show a cor-  
responding increase in the number of its segments.

121 By combining the various factors involved in change, it is pos-  
1978 sible to understand the details of lineage proliferation, or at least  
613 to travel along a well signposted road. In the light of this analy-  
161 sis, moreover, it is unnecessary to assume a stable population in  
each and every segment over long periods; the mechanisms of  
readjustment allow for substantial irregularities and fluctuations  
in population. It is possible that they are also sufficient to con-  
tain significant increases in the aggregate population. They could  
almost certainly control minor fluctuations, but it is seriously  
doubted whether a population increase sufficient to produce a  
country-wide and acute water shortage could be met merely by  
the proliferation of tertiary lineage segments. But to deal with  
this problem other aspects of the Bedouin genealogy and details  
of Cyrenaican history, which have necessarily been omitted from  
this discussion, would have to be taken into account, and this is  
best left for another article.

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villages and towns, especially at Mersa Matrouh which is the seat of the local government. The second world war was also influential in changing attitude and social values. Men who were employed as unskilled labourers during the war by the different combating armies became accustomed to paid jobs and to cash remuneration, which had previously been practically unknown to them. When the war ended, it was not easy for those workers to go back to the old nomadic life with all its hardships and insecurity. Some of them preferred to migrate to the Delta, while the others decided to settle down to work in the desert villages and towns as servants or as unskilled labour in the local government departments, schools, hospitals, etc. Most of the younger men now prefer to follow their example; the settled sedentary life is thus gaining ground all the time at the expense of livestock husbandry. 178 166

But important as they may be in accelerating the drift from nomadism to sedentary life, these factors fall beyond the scope of this paper and need not be discussed further in this context. We shall be concerned with the plans and schemes which are deliberately designed to deal with the settlement of the nomadic and semi-nomadic clans. But before going on to consider this problem we should like to give a brief outline of the area itself so as to establish a clear idea about the general setting, and to see the projects themselves against a background of the whole social life. This should help us to understand more clearly the motives underlying the projects and to discern the effects they may have on the social situation. 000

Geographers generally divide the Western Desert into three main divisions, each of which has its outstanding characteristics. 133 105

1. The northern strip which extends some 500 kilometres along the coast from the west of Alexandria to the Egyptian-Libyan border. This strip, known as the *Dera'a Bahari*, consists mainly of fertile cultivated land which extends some 20 to 30 kilometres to the south, tending generally to become narrower to the west till it almost vanishes at Sollum near the frontiers.
2. To the south of this green coastal zone lies a high plateau in which are a number of depressions, the most important being the Qattara Depression.
3. The rest of the area; i.e. the extreme southern region, is real arid desert. The coastal zone is the only really inhabited and cultivated part of the desert; beyond it there is hardly any prospect for cultivation. It is also a vital centre to which the scattered clans and groups of herders come to gather round the water points and the artesian wells during the dry season when the water becomes scarce in the southern parts.

The climate of the desert varies between the Mediterranean climate to the north and along the coast, and the sub-tropical dry climate in the southern parts. The dry season is usually very warm, tending to grow hotter southwards; while the wet season, usually extending from November to March, is generally mild especially in the north. Rainfall is very erratic and varies greatly from year to year and from one place to another. But on the whole, there is more rain in the north than in the south, and in most years rain falls in the southern parts only on very rare occasions. Rain may come quite suddenly and cause torrential floods which sweep away dwellings, crops and animals alike. This is typical of the Sallum area. 132 105

According to the 1947 census, the Bedouins of the Western Desert number 68,161. Only 23,444, i.e. less than the half of the population, are engaged in 162 105

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• 105 livestock husbandry as their main occupation while the rest earn their living  
[62] by such other means as agriculture, fishing, stone-cutting, trade, etc. But  
whatever his main job may be, a man is likely to possess a number of sheep  
which he usually entrusts to a professional herdsman if he cannot look after  
them himself. This means that all sectors of the population have an active  
interest in livestock. Livestock, or rather sheep, are the most important and  
most esteemed item of wealth, and pastoral values still rank very high in spite  
of the obvious attraction of other types of work. On the other hand, pure  
nomadism is not practised, except perhaps by some small groups of camel-  
herders living in the far south of the area. The tremendous majority of the  
herdsmen are sheep-herders, whose movements are much more restricted  
than the movements of the real nomads. They have permanent settlements to  
which they retire when the grazing season is over, and there they practise  
agriculture, which they consider a secondary and supplementary occupation.

Most of the inhabitants of the Western Desert belong to the Awlad Ali  
clans who originally came from Libya. Some less important and less numerous  
clans, the Morabiteen clans, also live there as 'clients' of the more powerful  
Awlad Ali. A certain degree of correspondence exists between clan segmentation  
and the distribution of lands, both pasture-land and the fertile arable areas of  
the northern strip being distributed among clans and lineages in a clearly  
defined manner. A man cannot make use of the grazing ground, much less of  
the cultivation ground, known to belong to a different clan or lineage ex-  
cept under certain conditions and only obtaining the owners' permission. This  
does not mean, however, that clans and lineages are localized. For in spite  
of the natural tendency of kinsmen to cluster together and to live near to  
each other, the members of the same clan-segment may be widely dispersed,  
and the inhabitants of any specific locality, especially near the coast, usually  
belong to different clans. Nevertheless, a certain clan may be more strongly  
represented in a particular locality than all the other clans.

105 The problem of water supply is, naturally, the most crucial problem with  
312 which the people have to cope. The absence of surface water, the shortness  
of the wet season, the low rainfall and the meagreness of the subterranean  
resources in most parts of the desert, especially inland, impose drastic limita-  
tions upon their activities. Apart from the few artesian wells found in the  
northern coastal zone, rain is the main source of water supply. It is,  
however, a very unreliable source because of its irregularity. Moreover, a  
considerable amount of rain-water is lost by seepage through the sand and  
by evaporation. The situation is further aggravated by the fact that not  
all the functioning wells yield potable water or even water suitable for the  
irrigation of fields. The water of a large number of these artesian wells  
is charged with a high percentage of dissolved salts. This water can only be  
used for domestic purposes. Certain experiments are now being carried out  
at Ras-el-Hikma and Fuka to see whether such saline water could be used  
for irrigating the pasture-lands.

105 The two main complementary occupations, i.e. livestock husbandry and  
243 the cultivation of barley, are seriously affected by the water situation. The  
311 strip of arable land which extends along the sea coast varies in breadth from  
place to place and from year to year according to the rainfall. In good years  
it may stretch some 10 to 20 kilometres southwards, but in bad years the cul-  
tivation becomes rather patchy and is confined to a very narrow strip only a  
few kilometres wide. The people are never sure of their crops, and in really

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bad years the returns may be so poor that grain and flour have to be sent from the Delta to avert famine. The failure of the crop may also compel whole clan-segments to migrate with their animals to the Delta. In this respect, the semi-nomadic clans of the Western Desert represent a real burden on the national economy of Egypt. 105  
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Livestock husbandry, which is by far the most important and highly valued occupation, is itself subject to the variability and the erratic nature of rainfall, since it is the rain which determines the abundance of herbage and, consequently, the number of animals reared. Pasture land is found mainly to the south of the cultivated land. Sometimes, the fallow patches among the barley fields are also covered with grass and other pasture plants suitable for grazing. Pasture plants usually persist between December and May; during the summer, the land becomes arid hard desert with only few dispersed patches of dry grass. The grazing season *par excellence* is from November to April, during which period barley stands in the fields. After the first showers of November, barley is sown and the young men soon move with their flocks to the pastures, leaving the older people to look after the fields. As the dry season advances, the flocks are moved northwards to the cultivated lands so as to be nearer to fodder and to water-holes. Thus, the movements of the herders are rhythmic and regulated by the division of the year into two major seasons: the wet season and the dry season. The wet season is the period of plenty during which the animals are well fed; the dry season is the period of starvation for the flocks which must then rely on such fodder as barley straw and on the drying grass. Any movements of animals that may take place during that season are carried out on a very limited scale. In exceptionally bad years the people are compelled to dispose of their animals, or at least of a large part of the flocks, or they may send them away to their friends and relatives who may be living near vegetation. Sometimes, the herdsmen find themselves compelled to cross the frontiers to Cyrenaica for pasture. 105  
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We can see then from this brief account to what extent the water situation is responsible for determining the modes of living in the desert and for channeling human activities and imposing certain limitations on these activities. Development projects and sedentarization schemes planned for the Western Desert and its inhabitants must, therefore, give a great deal of importance to the question of water and its availability. In fact, most of the contemplated projects envisage the possibility of better exploitation of the existing water supplies as well as the tapping of potential resources. 105

Rightly or wrongly, it is generally assumed in Egypt that nomadism and semi-nomadism represent a phase of deterioration which is no longer compatible with the actualities of modern life and therefore should be abolished. For, apart from the fact that it is responsible for the hardships and insecurity suffered by the desert dwellers and the consequent ill effects on the national economy, especially in bad years, nomadism as practised in the Western Desert and under the prevailing circumstances is wasteful and destructive. Vast stretches of land which could be reclaimed at little cost and cultivated intensively are simply left for grazing without any serious endeavour to make better use of them. Under the contemplated sedentarization projects it is intended to increase the cultivated area, to improve the pastures by introducing new pasture plants of higher nutritive value in areas where agriculture is not 178  
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